



The Old Ironsides Report

28 July 2003

Volume I Issue 7

1st AD Unit Keeps Iraqi Army Hopefuls in Line

Story and photo By Lisa Burgess, Stars and Stripes
European edition

BAGHDAD, Iraq — The same soldiers who served former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein seem every bit as eager to serve in a new army organized by Americans, judging by the massive lines stretching down the block from a 3-day-old Baghdad recruiting center.

The new Iraqi army has three recruiting centers: in Baghdad, Basra and Mosul. A fourth center is scheduled to open in Irbil as soon as arrangements can be completed with local authorities, Combined Joint Task Force-7 officials said.

The 1st Armored Division's Battery C, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery from Baumholder, Germany, which is part of the 1st AD's 2nd Brigade, has been one of the units responsible for pulling crowd security for the Baghdad recruiting center since it opened July 19. Capt. Jim Hickman, an Atlanta native, commands the battery.

Late on Monday morning, Hickman's unit was out in the blazing sun, coping with a crowd that ran three-deep down the block.

Hickman's unit, which has been in the Baghdad area since April, was assigned to the recruiting station duty after performing a variety of missions, including mounted and dismounted patrols, according to Staff Sgt. Jeff Dayton.

Sgt. Dimas DeLeon, a Houston native, said he gets his men up at 5 a.m. for the new guard duty, even though the recruiting center is steps away from Forward Operating Base Thunder where the section beds down.

At 8 a.m. sharp, the soldiers begin handing out army applications, which are written in Arabic, said 1st Lt. Christian Labra of Pawling, N.Y., who is part of Battery C.

On July 19, the first day the center was open, 2,000 applications were snatched up "in an hour," Labra said.

On July 20, the U.S. soldiers passed out 1,000 applications just as quickly. And on Monday, 800 applications were handed out.

According to coalition officials, the army will be open to all male Iraqi citizens between the ages of 18 and 40. But former top-level Baath party members, Special Republican Guard soldiers, and top-level security and intelligence officers need not apply.

The soldiers of Battery C, however, are not making any effort to prescreen the crowd — just control it.

"We're not turning anyone down from the application process," Hickman said. "Those decisions are all made inside," by the civilian organizers of the army.

Getting an application for the new army is only the first step in what looks to be a lengthy process.

Once the applications are distributed, there is no action at the recruiting centers for most would-be Iraqi soldiers until 1 p.m., when the U.S. soldiers open the gates to groups of 20 to 25 at a time, Hickman said.



Soldiers from the 1st Armored Division's Battery C, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery from Baumholder, Germany, pull crowd security duty Monday at the Baghdad recruiting center as it accepts applications for the Iraqi army.

After a pat down for weapons, the groups are sent to the civilian managers of the recruiting effort, who make appointments for full screenings at a later date.

The authorities set up 172 appointments on July 19 and another 218 on July 20, Labra said. He did not try to estimate how many appointments might be made by day's end Monday.

The screening will be conducted "like the normal [recruiting] station in the United States," Hickman explained.

Recruits must pass medical, dental and background checks; answer questions about their previous military service; and go through an interview.

Hayder Ali, a former sergeant in Saddam's army and father of a 1-year-old, was among the first in line Monday morning, waiting for a chance to schedule his interview.

Ali, who said he has not been paid since before the war began, hopes the process of getting the new army together won't take too long, "maybe one month, two months."

"They understand it's not going to be an overnight process," Hickman said. "But it's a step in the right direction."

Ali, for one, said he is planning to wait for a spot in the new army no matter how long the process takes.

"I want to serve my country, to help accomplish peace," he said.

Asked whether he is angry at the Americans for bombing his city, Ali smiled.

"To the contrary," he said. "They helped us get rid of a tyrant."

NEWS

U.S. Hunts for Saddam Around Tigris River

TIKRIT, Iraq (AP) - American forces focused their hunt for Saddam Hussein around his Tigris River hometown and reported a near-miss Sunday in a raid to capture his new chief of security - and perhaps the ousted dictator himself. A U.S. soldier was killed south of Baghdad, the latest death in a spike of guerrilla attacks. Troops of the 4th Infantry Division, acting on tips from informants, hit three farms in the Tikrit region in a pre-dawn attack but learned their specific target - the security chief - had left the area the day before.

Shelling Kills 14 in Liberian Capital

MONROVIA, Liberia (AP) - Mortar rounds pounded homes in Liberia's rebel-besieged capital, killing at least 14 people, while the U.S. ambassador appealed Sunday to insurgents to withdraw from the bloodied city and reopen its port for desperately needed food and aid. It was the eighth straight day of deadly bombardments of schools and churches in crowded neighborhoods of Monrovia, where rebels are pressing home their three-year campaign to drive out warlord-turned-president Charles Taylor.

Mutinous Philippine Soldiers Surrender

MANILA, Philippines (AP) - Mutinous troops who seized a Manila shopping and apartment complex demanding the government resign ended a 19-hour standoff late Sunday and returned to barracks without a shot fired. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo announced the crisis was over in a televised address, as experts defused explosives the mutineers had rigged up inside the financial district's Glorietta complex.

Oddly Enough

Restaurant's 'Fat Boy' Mascot Disappears

WEST DENNIS, Mass. -- A local celebrity of sorts on Cape Cod has disappeared: a 7-foot-high fiberglass statue known as "Fat Boy." Sometime after 2 a.m. Friday, someone stole the chef mascot from its resting spot at Spaghetti Eddies in West Dennis, leaving behind his Fiberglas size 10 shoes, a sign and some sunglasses. "It looks like they tackled it off," chef Robert Swanson told the Cape Cod Times. "They had to run at it to bust it off." The Swanson searched the restaurant trash, the woods, and a nearby pool for the \$1,500 statue. He also called police, though he's not optimistic that Fat Boy will be a priority. Still, just before 5 p.m. Friday, a dispatcher sent out word over the police radio to keep a lookout for the 7-foot statue, saying, "Subject is white with a green apron."

SPORTS

Armstrong Wins 5th Tour De France in Row

PARIS (AP) - Sipping champagne to celebrate, Lance Armstrong won his hardest but sweetest Tour de France title Sunday - a record-tying fifth straight victory that places him alongside the greatest cyclists ever. The 31-year-old cancer survivor and Spanish great Miguel Indurain are now the only two riders to win the sport's most grueling and prestigious race five times in a row - a record Armstrong plans to break next year.

Missing Baylor Player's Family Awaits ID

WACO, Texas (AP) - The family of missing basketball player Patrick Dennehy waited anxiously Sunday for word on whether a body found at a rock quarry near Baylor University was the athlete's. Authorities said the body was too decomposed to immediately determine if it was Dennehy. An investigator with the Dallas County Medical Examiner's Office, who declined to give his name, said Saturday that it could take days to identify the remains.

A Smart tip from 1AD Safety:

FIELD EXPEDIENCY

"CUTTING CORNERS"

DON'T

- DO A JOB WITHOUT THE PROPER EQUIPMENT
- RUSH A JOB IF THERE IS NOT A COMBAT NECESSITY
- "RE-WIRE THE HOUSE IF YOU'RE NOT AN ELECTRICIAN"

DO

- ✓ STOP, THINK, AND THEN ACT
- ✓ SEEK GUIDANCE IF UNSURE
- ✓ LOOK FOR SAFER ALTERNATIVES

This Day in History: 28 July, 1868

On this day former slaves became citizens when the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified. Known as the "Reconstruction Amendment," it forbids any state to deny to any person "life, liberty or property, without due process of law" or to "deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of its laws." With its broadly phrased language, the Fourteenth Amendment continues to provide a basis for civil rights claims in the United States.